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AUTHOR Inoue, Yukiko
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted of the factors influencing status attainment, in particular socioeconomic status and parental influence on women's decisions to attend college and hold high occupational aspirations. Research using the Sewell-Haller-Portes (SHP) Model of Educational and Occupational Attainment Levels (1969) has resulted in an acceptance of educational attainment being the key to occupational attainment, with both parental status and parental encouragement playing significant roles in the attainment process for men. Using data from a national sample of high school seniors of 1972 (the year in which Title IX of the Education Amendments were enacted) and a review of literature, the study found that the influence of socioeconomic status is just as important for women as for men. The key ingredient for occupational attainment is educational attainment, with educational and occupational aspirations the precursors. The study provides considerable evidence that both the development and the maintenance of status aspirations in high school experiences exert pronounced influences on the probability of an individual's success in the adult and occupational world. The study also shows that significant others' influence has a direct effect on educational aspiration, which, in turn, has the strongest influence on educational attainment, clarifying a very strong association of significant others' influence (parents' and teachers' encouragement and support for setting higher educational and occupational goals) with educational aspiration. (Contains 100 references.) (KC)

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